

## CTC Questions and Answers

### 1. *What are the benefits of becoming a Cooperating Technical Community (CTC) partner?*

Each partner may have a different view of the benefits, and perceived benefits may vary as a function of the activity to be performed. Among the anticipated benefits to a CTC partner are:

- FEMA acknowledges your in-house capabilities;
- Your flood hazard maps will be more accurate and can be updated faster;
- Your flood hazard maps will match the studies that you use or produce;
- You can leverage local funds to expand the scope of a FEMA-contracted study or product (e.g., higher resolution topography, or continuing the upstream limit of a study);
- Your mapping priorities are factored into FEMA's process to determine mapping priorities.

### 2. *What types of organizations qualify as CTC partners?*

Three types have been identified: communities that participate in the NFIP, State agencies, and regional agencies that serve communities that participate in the NFIP. Eligible regional agencies may be watershed management districts, flood control districts, regional planning councils, councils of governments, or perhaps a regional office of a State agency.

### 3. *What selection criteria does FEMA use for CTCs?*

Fiscal Year 1999 is the first year of this initiative and the FEMA Regional Offices have selected pilot communities based on the following criteria:

- 1) The CTC partner must have existing processes and/or systems in place that support mapping or data collection activities that contribute to flood hazard identification. Non-federal funding must support these ongoing processes and/or systems.
- 2) The CTC partner must have demonstrated the capability to perform the mapping activities for which it is applying.
- 3) The CTC partner must be a community participating in the NFIP, and be in good standing in the program as determined by the FEMA Regional Office, or be a State or regional agency that serves communities that participate in the NFIP.

These criteria will be periodically reviewed by FEMA and may be further enhanced in subsequent years. In addition to the above selection criteria, communities that receive funding through a Cooperative Agreement (CA) must be able to perform the financial management activities required as part of the CA (i.e. account for federal funds, prepare financial reports). FEMA regional offices will assist the communities with these financial management activities.

4. *What mapping activities can be done by a CTC partner? Are these activities eligible for funding?*

Funding for the pilot years (1999 and 2000) is very limited. The following activities may be funded by FEMA in Fiscal Year 1999:

- Refinement of approximate Zone A boundaries;
- Hydrologic & hydraulic modeling and floodplain mapping;
- DFIRM preparation;
- Redelineation of detailed flood hazard information using updated topographic data; and
- Analysis of community mapping needs to support FEMA's Mapping Needs Update Support System (MNUSS).

During the pilot years, FEMA will consider the following locally funded activities:

- Base map inventory;
- Digital base map data sharing;
- DFIRM maintenance;
- Hydrologic and Hydraulic review; and
- Adoption of specific technical standards or processes appropriate for local conditions for NFIP mapping purposes.

Additionally, FEMA is exploring additional activities, which may include:

- Limited Digital Elevation Model (DEM) or traditional topographic data development;
- Post-disaster data collection and flood hazard verification.

5. *A community would like to become a CTC Partner but does not have the necessary personnel or budget to perform the extra workload. Is there still a role for them in CTC?*

The initial focus under the CTC initiative will be to recognize those communities and organizations that have in-house capabilities and can assume certain functions in FEMA's mapping process. The CTC initiative is intended to support, not replace, ongoing mapping activities by CTC partners, and to help them to take on responsibility for flood hazard mapping activities through technical and limited financial support. The funds that support the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) mapping program are collected as part of the \$30 Federal Policy Fee that is charged to flood insurance policy holders. Therefore, FEMA must produce tangible products in order to fulfill the purpose intended for those funds. FEMA is anxious to encourage participation, and several levels of activities are being defined. However, FEMA does not intend to provide funds for partners to hire new staff or to develop staff capabilities. Interested communities may wish to participate in current FEMA training courses or those that are expected to be developed in the near future.

6. *A community would like to become more involved in the development of their flood maps but doesn't have the necessary in-house technical expertise. Can they still be involved in CTC?*

Having in-house technical capability is a key factor in designating CTCs. You may want to enhance your staff capabilities, especially as FEMA develops training courses designed for its mapping partners. FEMA is optimizing its flood study process to incorporate greater local involvement at the inception and throughout the preparation of a map update, for all communities, not just those involved in the CTC initiative.

7. *Can the CTC Memorandum of Agreement between FEMA and the community be modified should the community's capabilities change?*

Yes. One of the long-term benefits that FEMA anticipates is that partners will want to increase their in-house capabilities in order to have a larger role in the partnership. The CTC Agreement anticipates changes, and either FEMA or the partner can initiate a modification. Note, however, that if a community's capabilities diminish, then it will be appropriate to revisit the Agreement to determine if the activities should be modified to reflect the change in capability.

8. *What training is available to allow CTC partners to better understand FEMA's map modernization program and CTC initiative?*

In FY 2000, the following courses are tentatively planned for FEMA's Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, Maryland:

- Digital hazard data, including DFIRMs and Q3s;
- FEMA software;
- Coastal theory and mapping;
- GIS and advanced mapping technology;
- NFIP map revisions and amendments; and
- Remote sensing for flood studies.

FEMA is evaluating other formats for training including: modular workshops given at local meetings and conferences; CD-ROM-based self-paced courses; and the Internet. For information on the availability of training, contact the CTC Coordinator in your FEMA Regional office.

9. *Will FEMA provide annual funding for CTC activities to CTC partners?*

Most CTC Mapping Activities will be collaborative efforts where both the CTC partner and FEMA contribute data and units of work to maximize the extent, accuracy, and utility of flood studies to best meet local and Federal needs, while minimizing costs for all parties. Unless Congress authorizes supplemental map modernization funding, Federal funding will be limited. In any event, Federal funding for CTCs will be guided by identified priority map needs.

FEMA may provide funding to CTC partners to perform mapping activities that would have been accomplished through other means. For example, if a partner assumes the responsibility to

produce a new study that is on FEMA's priority list, the funds that would normally support that effort may be available to the partner. Similarly, if FEMA planned to convert an existing study to digital format, the funds programmed for that activity may be available if the partner performs the same function. For certain activities that are on-going, such as base map data sharing or review of hydrologic and hydraulic analyses, FEMA does not plan to provide funding. However, the partner may establish its own fee schedule for services, similar to the fee charge system used by FEMA.

10. *If a community initially enters into a CTC agreement without receiving funds from FEMA, how will that impact upon its ability to receive funding in the future?*

The CTC initiative recognizes locally funded activities and may involve FEMA funds as well. The CTC partner and FEMA enter into an overall partnership agreement that recognizes the fundamental importance of flood hazard identification, flood insurance, and floodplain management. Then, as the CTC partner and FEMA identify specific mapping activities to undertake, Mapping Activity Statements will be developed and entered into under the umbrella of the overall agreement. Future funding, if available, will be negotiated as part of and included in the Mapping Activity Statements.

11. *We understand that CTCs will need to enter into a Cooperative Agreement (CA) with FEMA to obtain CTC funding. What will be required of CTC partners to administer the FEMA grant under the CA?*

CTC partners that receive funding through a CA must be able to perform the financial management activities required as part of the cooperative agreement (i.e. account for federal funds, prepare financial reports). FEMA regional offices will assist the communities with these financial management activities. Similarly, for FEMA-funded activities, contractors used by CTC partners must meet the requirements of 44CFR Part 13, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.

12. *What types of cost sharing can CTC communities provide? How will cost sharing impact a community's ability to become a CTC?*

The National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994 anticipates that communities may want to cost-share in studies that are identified by FEMA as high priority studies. The CTC Agreement is a mechanism that could facilitate that desire. One way would be for FEMA to provide partial funding to the community, who would contract to have studies performed, and manage and review the contracted work. The inverse may also be possible: a community could transfer funds to FEMA. Although the Reform Act sets out this possibility, it should be noted that FEMA's Office of General Counsel is examining whether FEMA has the authority to accept and spend non-Federal funds for flood mapping.

13. *As a CTC, what reporting requirements will be required by FEMA?*

Specific reporting requirements will depend on the activity, and will be agreed upon by the partner and FEMA's Regional CTC Project Officer. For those CTCs that receive funding, the requirements for financial reporting are established by 44 CFR 13.41. Generally, quarterly progress and financial reports will be necessary.

14. *What liabilities does a community face by becoming involved in the CTC initiative? Will FEMA indemnify the community against any legal ramifications of their actions regarding flood restudies, map revisions and flood zone determinations?*

A community assumes no additional liability by becoming involved in the CTC initiative. Existing federal and state laws and regulations govern a community's liability for providing information to the public, enforcing local ordinances zoning regulations, etc. FEMA retains the final authority for issuing final Flood Insurance Rate Maps and any revisions to Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

15. *Can locally acceptable technical methodologies besides those approved by FEMA be used by CTCs?*

FEMA is responsible for producing map products that meet established national standards and regulations. Because mandatory flood insurance purchase decisions and actuarial rates are determined for specific properties based on the mapped Special Flood Hazard Area, those standards cannot be varied easily. However, one of the benefits of the CTC initiative is to interject a tailored, local focus into the program where unique conditions may exist that necessitate special approaches to flood hazard identification. In fact, one of the mapping activities being developed by FEMA is a Technical Standards Statement, which allows adoption of specific technical standards or processes appropriate for local conditions for NFIP mapping purposes. FEMA maintains a list of approved models, and locally-accepted methodologies can be submitted to FEMA for review and inclusion on the list.